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# GREAT SPEECH,

DELIVERED IN NEW YORK CITY,

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# HENRY WARD BEECHER,

ON THE

## Conflict of Northern and Southern Theories

## OF MAN AND SOCIETY,

January 14, 1855.

UNIV. OF  
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# Conflict of Northern and Southern Theories OF MAN AND SOCIETY.

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The Eighth Lecture of the Course before the Anti-Slavery Society, was delivered, January 14, 1855, at the Tabernacle, New York, by the Rev. HENRY WARD BEECHER. The subject, at the present time, is one of peculiar interest, as touching the questions of Slavery and Know-Nothingism, and, together with the popularity of the lecturer, drew together a house-full of auditors.

There were a number of gentlemen of distinction, occupying seats on the rostrum—among whom were the Hon. Joshua R. Giddings, James Mott, of Philadelphia, and Mr. Dudley, of Buffalo.

Mr. Beecher was introduced to the audience by Mr. OLIVER JOHNSON, who said:

*Ladies and Gentlemen:* The speaker who occupied this platform on Tuesday evening last, in the course of his remarks upon the wide degeneracy of the American Clergy on the Slavery Question, reminded us that there was in a Brooklyn pulpit, A MAN. We thought you would be glad to see and hear such a *rara avis*, and therefore have besought him to come hither to-night to instruct us by his wisdom and move us by his eloquence. I trust that, whatever you may think of some other parts of the lecture of WENDELL PHILLIPS, you will, when this evening's performance is over, be ready at least to confess that in what he said of the Brooklyn preacher he was not more eulogistic than truthful.

MR. BEECHER, on presenting himself, was received with loud and hearty applause. He spoke as follows:

The questions which have provoked discussion among us for fifty years past have not been questions of fundamental principles, but of the *application* of principles already ascertained. Our debates have been between one way of doing a thing and another way of doing it—between living well and living better; and so through, it has been a question between good and better. We have discussed policies, not principles. In Europe, on the other hand, life-questions have agi-

tated men. The questions of human rights, of the nature and true foundations of Government, are to-day, in Europe, where they were with our fathers in 1639.

In this respect, there is a moral dignity, and even grandeur, in the struggles, secretly or openly going on in Italy, Austria, Germany, and France, which never can belong to the mere questions of mode and manner which occupy us—boundary questions, banks, tariffs, internal improvements, currency; all very necessary but secondary topics. They touch nothing deeper than the pocket. In this respect, there would be a marked contrast between the subjects which occupy us, and the grander life-themes that dignify European thought, were it not for one subject—*Slavery*. THAT is the ONLY question, in our day and in our community, full of vital struggles turning upon fundamental principles.

If Slavery were a plantation-question, concerning only the master and the slave, disconnected from us, and isolated—then, though we should regret it, and apply moral forces for its ultimate remedy, yet, it would be, (as are questions of the same kind in India or South America,) remote, constituting a single element in that globe of darkness of which this world is the core, and which Christianity is yet to shine through and change to light. But it is *not* a plantation-question. It is a national question. The disputes implied by the violent relations between the owner and the chattel may only *morally* touch us.—But the disputes between the masters and the Government, and between the Government, impregnated with Slavery, and the Northern citizen, these touch us sharply, and if not wisely met, will yet scourge us with thorns! Indeed, I cannot say that I believe that New England and the near North will be affected *locally*, and immediately by an adverse issue of the great national struggle now going on. But the North will be an utterly dead force in the American nation.

She will be rolled tip in a corner, like a cocoon waiting for its transmigration. The whole North will become provincial; it will be but a fringe to a nation whose heart will beat in the South.

But New-England was not raised up by Divine Providence to play a mean part in the world's affairs.

Remember, that New-England brought to America those principles which every State in the Union has more or less thoroughly adopted.

New-England first formed those institutions which liberty requires for benevolent activity; and from her, both before and since the Revolution, they have been copied throughout the Land. Having given to America its ideas and its institutions, I think the North is bound to stand by them.

Until 1800, the North had distinctive national influence, and gave shape, in due measure, to national policy, as she had before to national institutions.

Then she began to recede before the rising of another power. For the last fifty years, upon the national platform have stood arrayed two champions in mortal antagonism—New-England and the near North—representing personal freedom, civil liberty, universal education, and a religious spirit which always sympathises with men more than with Governments.

The New-England theory of Government has always been in its element—first, independent men; then democratic townships; next republican States, and, in the end, a Federated Union of Republican States. All her economies, her schools, her policy, her industry, her wealth, her intelligence, have been at agreement with her theory and policy of Government. Yet, New-England, strong at home, compact, educated, right-minded; has gradually lost influence, and the whole North with her.

The Southern League of States, have been held together by the cohesive power of Common Wrong. Their industry, their policy, their whole interior, vital economy, have been at variance with the apparent principles of their own State Governments, and with the National Institutions under which they exist. They have stood upon a narrow basis, always shaking under them, without general education, without general wealth, without diversified industry. And yet since the year 1800, they have steadily prevailed against Representative New-England and the North. The South, the truest representation of Absolutism under republican forms, is mightier in our Nation-

al Councils and Policy to-day than New-England, the mother and representative of true republicanism and the whole free North.

And now it has come to pass that, in the good providence of God, another opportunity has been presented to the whole North to reassert her place and her influence, and to fill the institutions of our country with their original and proper blood. I do not desire that she should arise and put on her beautiful garments, because she is my mother, and your mother; not because her hills were the first which my childhood saw, that has never since beheld any half so dear; nor from any sordid ambition, that she should be great in this world's greatness; nor from any profane wish to abstract from the rightful place and influence of any State, or any section of our whole country. But I think that God sent New-England to these shores as his own messenger of mercy to days and ages, that have yet far to come ere they are born! She has not yet told this Continent all that is in her heart. She has sat down like Bunyan's Pilgrim, and slept in the bower by the way, and where she slept she has left her roll—God grant that she hath not lost it there while she slumbered!

By all the love that I bear to the cause of God, and the glory of his Church, by the yearnings which I have for the welfare of the human kind, by all the prophetic expectations which I have of the destiny of this land, God's Almoner of Liberty to the World, I desire to see Old Representative New-England, and the affiliated North, rouse up and do their first works.

Is it my excited ear that hears an airy phantasm whispering? or do I hear a solemn voice crying out, "*Arise! Shine! thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is arisen upon thee!*"

I am quite aware that the subject of Slavery has been regarded, by many, as sectional; and the agitation of it in the North needless, and injurious to our peace and the country's welfare. Whatever may have been the evils, the agitation has only come *through* men, not *from* them. It is of God. It is the underheaving of Providence. Mariners might as well blame *you* for the swing and toss of their craft when tides troop in or march out of your harbor, as us, for heaving to that tide which God swells under us. Tides in the ocean and in human affairs are from celestial bodies and celestial beings. The conflict which is going on springs from causes as deep as the foundations of our institutions. It will go on to a crisis; its settlement will be an era in the world's history, either of advance or of decline.

I wish to call your patient attention to the real nature of this contest. It is,

*The conflict between Northern theories and Southern theories of man and of Society.*

There have been, from the earliest period of the world, two different, and oppugnant, doctrines of man—*his place, rights, duties and relations*. And the theory of man is always the starting point of all other theories, systems, and Governments which divide the world.

Outside of a Divine and Authoritative Revelation, men have had but one way of estimating the value of man. He was to them simply a creature of time, and to be judged in the scientific method, by his *phenomena*. The Greeks and the Romans had no better way. They did not know enough of his origin, his nature, or his destiny, to bring these into account, in estimating man. Accordingly they could do no better than to study him in his developments and rank him by the power which he manifested. Now if a botanist should describe a biennial plant, whose root and stem belong to one season, whose blossom and fruit belong to another, as if that were the whole of it which the first year produced, he would commit the same mistake which the heathen idea of man commits in measuring and estimating a being whose true life comes hereafter, by the developments which he makes in only this world.

From this earthly side of man springs the most important practical results. For the doctrine of man, simply as he *is in this life, logically deduces Absolutism and Aristocracy*.

If the *power of producing effects* is the criterion of value, the few will always be the *most valuable* and the mass relatively, subordinate, and the weak and lowest will be left helplessly worthless.

And the mass of all the myriads that do live, are of no more account than working animals; and there is, no such a theory, no reason, *a priori*; why they should not be controlled by superior men, and made to do that for which they seem the best fitted—Work and Drudgery! Only long experiment could teach a doctrine contrary to the logical presumption arising from weakness. There could be no doctrine of *human rights*. It would be simply a doctrine of *human forces*. *Right* would be a word as much out of place as among birds and beasts. Authority would go with productive greatness, as gravity goes with mass in matter. The whole chance of Right, and the whole theory of Liberty, springs from that part of man that lies beyond this life.

As a material creature, man ranks among physical forces. Rights come from his spiritual nature.

The body is of the earth, and returns to earth, and is judged by earthly measures. The soul is of God, and returns to God, and is judged by Divine estimates. And this is the reason why a free, unobstructed Bible always works toward human rights. It is the only basis on which the poor, the ignorant, the weak, the laboring masses can entrench against oppression.

What, then, is that theory of man which Christianity gives forth?

It regards man not as a perfect thing, put into life to blossom and die, as a perfect flower doth. Man is a *seed*, and birth is *planting*. He is in life for cultivation, not exhibition; he is here chiefly to be *acted on*, not to be characteristically an agent. For, though man is also an actor, he is yet more a recipient. Though he produces effects, he receives a thousand fold more than he produces. And he is to be estimated by his capacity of receiving, not of doing. *He has his least value in what he can do; it all lies in what he is capable of having done to him.* The eye, the ear, the tongue, the nerve of touch, are all simple receivers. The understanding, the affections, the moral sentiments, all, are primarily and characteristically, recipients of influence; and only secondarily agents. Now, how different is the value of ore, dead in its silent waiting-places, from the wrought blade, the all but living engine, and the carved and curious utensil!

Of how little value is a ship standing helpless on the stocks—but half-built, and yet building—to one who has no knowledge of the ocean, or of what that helpless hulk will become the moment she slides into her element, and rises and falls upon the flood with joyous greeting!

The value of an acorn is not what it is, but what it shall be when nature has brooded it, and brought it up, and a hundred years have sung through its branches and left their strength there!

He, then, that judges man by what he can do, judges him in the seed. We must see him through some lenses—we must prefigure his *immortality*. While, then, his *industrial* value in life must depend on what he can do, we have here the beginning of a *moral* value which bears no relation to his *power*, but to his future destiny.

This view assumes distinctness and intensity, when we add to it the relationship which subsists between man and his Maker.

This relationship begins in the fact that we are created in the divine image; that we are connected with God, therefore, not by Government alone, but by nature.

This initial truth is made radiant with meaning, by the teaching of Christianity that every human being is dear to God: a teaching which stands upon that platform, built high above all human deeds and histories, the advent, incarnation, passion, and death of Christ, as a Savior of men.

The race is a brotherhood; God is the Father, Love is the law of this great human commonwealth, and Love knows no servitude. It is that which gilds with liberty whatever it touches.

One more element to human liberty is contributed by Christianity, in the solemn development of man's accountability to God, by which condition hereafter springs from pure character here.

However heavy that saying is, every one of us shall give an account of himself before God—in it is the life of the race.

You cannot present man as a subject of Divine government, held responsible for results, compared with which the most momentous earthly deeds are insignificant, plied with influences accumulating from eternity, and by powers which though they begin on earth in the cradle, gentle as a mother's voice singing lullaby, go on upward, taking every thing as they go, till they reach the whole power of God; and working out results that outlast time and the sun, and revolve for ever in flaming circuits of disaster, or in sacred circles of celestial bliss; you cannot present man as the center and subject of such an august and eternal drama, without giving him something of the grandeur which resides in God himself, and in the spheres of immortality!

Who shall trifl with such a creature, full bound upon such an errand through life, and swelling forth to such a destiny? Clear the place where he stands? —give him room and help, but no hindrance, as he equips for eternity!—loosen the bonds of man, for God girds him!—take off all impediments, for it is his life and death and struggle for immortality!

That this effect of accountability to God was felt by the inspired writers, cannot be doubtful to any who weigh such language as this:

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not, therefore judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

By making man important in the sight of God, he becomes sacred to his fellow. The more grand and far-reaching are the divine claims, the greater is our conception of the scope and worth

of being. Human rights become respected in the ratio in which human responsibility is felt. Whatever objections men may hold to Puritanism—their theory since the days of St. Augustine has constantly produced tendencies to liberty and a prevalent belief in the natural *rights of man*—and on account of that very feature which to many, has been so offensive—its rigorous doctrine of human accountability. Here, then, is the idea of man which Christianity gives in contrast with the inferior and degrading heathen notions of man. He is a being but *begun* on earth—a seed only planted here for its first growth. He is connected with God, not as all matter is, by proceeding from creative power, but by partaking the divine nature, by the declared personal affection of God, witnessed and sealed by the presence and sufferings of the world's Redeemer. He is a being upon whom is rolled the responsibility of character and eternal destiny! Of such a creature it were as foolish to take an estimate, by what he *is* and what he can *do* in this life, as it would be to estimate by an eagle's egg, what the old eagle is worth, with wings outspread far above the very thunder, or coming down upon its quarry as the thunder comes! It is the Future that gives value to the Present. It is Immortality only that reaches down a measure wherewith to gauge a man. If a heathen measures, the strong are strong, and the weak are weak: the rich, the favored, must rule, and their shadow must dwarf all others. If a Christian measures, he hears a voice saying: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*" Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my mother, and sister, and "brother."

These are the things that give value to man. It is not to be said that there is no difference between men; that one is not more powerful than another; that one is not richer in genius than another; that one is not more valuable to society than another; that education, refinement, skill, experience, give no precedence over their negatives. But God takes up the *least* of all human creatures, and, declares, "*inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me.*" In a household, a babe is vastly less than the grown-up children. But who dare touch it, as if it were as worthless as it is weak?

So God pleads his own relationship to the meanest human creation, as his protection from

wrong; as the evidence of his rights, as the reason of his dignity! There is something of God in the meanest creature. He is sacred from injury! In these truths we find the reason why Christianity always takes *hold so low down* in human life. Things that have got their root need little from the gardener; but the seeds, and tender sprouts, and difficult plants, require and get nurture.

A Christianity that takes care of the rich, the strong, the governing class, and neglects the poor, and ignorant, and the unrefined, as the antitype of Christ.

It is in this direction only, that the declaration of man's equality is true. No heathen nation could say that "all men are born free and equal"—for in more earthly respects it is false. But it is a truth that stands only and firmly in those grand relations which man sustains to *God, to Eternity, and to future dignity*—all are equally subjects of these. Man is ungrown. All his fruit is green. If he must stand by what *he is*, how surely must he be given over to weakness, to abuse, to oppressions. The weak are the natural prey to the strong, and superiority is a charter for tyranny.

But if he be an heir, waiting for an inheritance of God, eternal in the heavens, woe be to him that dare lay a finger on him because he is a minor!

I dwell the longer upon this view because it carries the world's heart in it. We must deepen our thoughts of man, and bore for the springs of liberty far below the drainings of surface strata, down deep, Artesian, till we strike something that shall be beyond winter or summer, frost or drouth.

I do not believe that there is a doctrine of individual rights nor of civil liberty that can stand outside of Christianity. They are to be seen revealed in nature, but there is none to interrupt them with authority. Christ is the World's Emancipator, for he hath declared that men belong to *Him*; and an oppressor thus becomes a felon, a robber, and a wronger of God, in the person of every poor and wretched victim!

A Christianity that tells man what his origin is—of God; his destiny, to God again; his errand on earth, to grow toward goodness, and make the most of himself—this Christianity is rank rebellion in despotisms, and insurrection on plantations. It cannot be preached there.

These two radical theories of man—man, a physical creature to be judged by effects produced in Time; or man, a spiritual creature, to be judg-

ed by the development to which he is destined, are at the root of all the antagonisms between the spirit of northern and southern institutions: northern policy and southern policy. In the North, it is the public sentiment of the people, that all men are born free and equal; that every man has an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, forfeited only by *crime*. The North believe that personal and political liberty are not only *rights* of man, but their *necessity*, that man cannot thrive nor develop, with the true proportions of manhood, without liberty. It is the northern sentiment that a man must be prepared for liberty, and that the act of *birth* is that preparation; that no creature lives which is the better for oppression, and who will not be the better for freedom, which is the natural air appointed for the soul's breathing. The North despairs every pretense that men are injured by sudden liberty. A famished man may injure himself by over-feeding; but that is an argument not against food, but against famine. It is the northern sentiment, and justly deduced from the Christian theory of man, that society should redeem all its own children from ignorance, should secure their growth, equip them for citizenship, make all the influences of society enure to the benefit of the mass of men. The southern sentiment is the reverse of this. It holds that all men are not born free and equal; that men have not an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and that men are not in their very constitution fitted for liberty, and benefited by it. They hold that liberty is an attribute of power; that it is a blossom which belongs to *races*, and not to mankind; that a part were born to rule, and a part were ordained to serve; that liberty is dangerous to the many; that servitude, the most rigorous, is a blessing; that it accords with the creative intent of God, and with his revealed institutions; that a nation cannot be homogeneous, and should not aim at it; that there is a law and scale of gradation, on which the top is privilege and authority, the bottom labor and obedience. These are the radical theories of the respective sections of the land. Men often are profoundly ignorant of the principles which control their policy, as a ship is unconscious of the rudder that steers her. Many are found, both North and South, whose conduct over-rules their theory, and who are better or worse than their belief. There are southern men who are more generous than their theory, and there are northern men who are grossly untrue to the northern theory, which, with their lips,

they profess. There are southern men with northern consciences, and there are northern men with southern consciences. But, in the main, these respective theories reign and regulate public procedure. There is not a man so poor in the North, or so ignorant, or so useless, as not to be regarded as a Man, by religion, by civil law, and by public opinion. Selfishness and pride, avarice and cunning, anger or lust, may prey upon the heedlessness or helplessness of many. Society may be full of evils. But all these things are not sequences of northern doctrines, but violations of them. If sharks in great cities consume the too credulous emigrant; if usurers, like moths, cut the fabric of life with invisible teeth; if landlords sack their tenements and pinch the tenant—all these results are against the spirit of our law, against public feeling, and they that do such things must slink and burrow. They are vermin that run in the walls, and peep from hiding-holes, and we set traps for them as we do for rats or weasels. But, in the South, the subordination of man, to man, in his earnings, his skill, his time and labor—in his person, his affections, his very children—is a part of the theory of society, drawn out into explicit statutory law, coincident with public opinion, and executed without secrecy. A net spread for those guilty of such wrongs against man, would catch States, and Legislatures, Citizens, Courts, and Constitutions.

In the North the most useless pauper that burdens the Alms-House—the most uncombed foreigner that delves in a ditch—the most abject creature that begs a morsel from door to door, *is yet a man*; and there is, not in theory only, but in the public sentiment, a sacredness of rights, which no man, except by stealth, can violate with impunity. There is no other law for the Governor of New-York or of Massachusetts, than for the beggar in your streets. That which protects the dwelling and the property of the rich man, belongs just as much to the hovel of the beggar. God sends but one sun, and it is the same light that kindles against the roof of a mansion, that dawns upon the thatch of a hut. The same air comes to each, the same showers, the same seasons, summer and winter. And as is Nature, so in the North, is law, and the distributive benefits of society. They bathe society from top to bottom! The rich, the learned, the refined, the strong, may know how to make a better use of the air, but they have no more air of privilege to breath, than the poorest wretch.

In the South, exactly the reverse is true, not

by stealth, not by neglect of a recognized principle, but as the result of men's ideas, and by organized arrangements. Touch a hireling's wages, in the North, and the Law stands to defend him and beat you down! Take the laborer's wages in the South, and the law stands to defend you, and beat him down.

Beat a man, in the North, for a private wrong done, and the law will strike you. But in the South, it is the right of the white, unquestioned and unquestionable to beat every third person in the community.

Let the proudest mill-owner break but the skin of the poorest operative in Lowell or Lawrence, and both law and public sentiment, alike, would grasp and punish him!

But in the South the law refuses to look at any degree of cruelty in chastisements upon the universal laborer, short of maiming or death, and public sentiment is but little better than the law.

The laborer in the North answers to a tribunal; in the South, to a master, incensed, passionate, vindictive in justice executed upon all symptoms of resisting manhood!

In the North, nothing is more sacred than a man's family and his children. It would not be possible for a man to do public violence to a family circle without vindictive penalty. Let him separate a mother from her daughters, let him employ a hireling ruffian to carry off the boys into the country and parcel them out there—let him scatter the flock, and leave the children motherless, and the parents childless, and what do you think would become of *him*?

In the South it is a part of the civil rights of men to do these things whenever they please. And though public sentiment is better than law, yet as no public sentiment on earth is a match for legalized lust, or avarice, or the grip of misfortune, these things are continually done, and remorselessly. Cruelty, chastity, virtue, do not mean the same things in the South as in the North. A man is not blemished by deeds and indulgencies, upon a plantation, among slaves, which in the North, would strike him through with infamy and house him in the penitentiary.

In the South, there are many roads leading from the top of society to the bottom, but not one, not *one* from the bottom to the top.

In the North, if the citizen chooses to walk in it, *there is a road from every man's door up to the Governor's chair or the Presidential seat!*

It needs no words, now, to convince you, that out of such different theories of men, there will

exist in the North and in the South, extremely, different ideas of Society, Government, and Public Policy.

In the North, first in order of consideration is man, the individual man; next the family, made of those of common blood, and by far the strongest, as it is the most sacred of all institutions. Then comes the township, which presents the only spectacle of an absolute political democracy. For, here only, do citizens assemble in mass and vote, directly and not by representation. Next comes Society at large, or the mass of citizens grouped into States. And in Society, in the North, there are no classes except such as rise out of spontaneous forces. Wealth, experience, ability set men above their fellows. There they stand as long as there is a *real* superiority. But they stand there, not by legal force, nor to exercise any legal power, or to have one single privilege or prerogative, which does not belong just as much to every citizen clear down to the bottom. All that a class *means* in the North is, that when men have shown themselves strong and wise, men give them honor for it. Death levels it all down again. Their children inherit nothing. They must earn for themselves. There is no division of society into orders, by which some have privilege and some have not, some have opportunity and advantages which others have not.

In the South, society is divided into two great and prominent classes—the ruling and the obeying—the-thinking and the working. The labor of the South is performed by three million creatures who represent the heathen idea of man.

All the benefits that have accrued to man from Christianity, are appropriated and monopolized by the white population.

Here is a seam that no sophistry can sew up. Here is a society organized, not on an idea of equal rights, and of inequalities only as they spring from difference of worth, but on an idea of permanent, political, organized inequality among men. They carry it so far that the theory of Slave law regards the slave not as an inferior man, governed, for his own good as well as for the benefit of the society at large, but it pronounces him, in reiterated forms, not a man at all, but a chattel.

When a community of States, by the most potential voice of Law, says to the whole body of its laboring population, Ye are not *men* and shall not be; ye are chattels—it is absurd to speak about kind treatment—about happiness. It is about cattle that they are talking! Our vast

body of laboring men do not yet feel the force of such a theory of human society. But, if that political system, which has openly been making such prodigious strides for the last fifty years, and effecting, secretly, a yet greater change in men's ideas of society and government, shall gain complete ascendancy, they, in their turn, and in due time will know and see the difference between a Republican Democracy and a Republican Aristocracy?

Out of such original and radical differences, there must flow a perpetual contrast and opposition of policies and procedures, in the operation of society and of business. We will select but a few, of many, subjects of contrast, Work, Education, Freedom of Speech and of the Press, and Religion.

I. WORK. Among us, and from the beginning, Work has been honorable. It has been honorable to dig, to hew, to build, to reap, to wield the hammer at the forge, and the saw at the bench. It has been honorable because our people have been taught that each man is set to make the most of himself. The crown for every victory gained in a struggle of skill or industry over matter is placed upon the soul; and thus among a free people industry becomes education.

It is the peculiarity of Northern labor, that it *thinks*. It is intelligence working out through the hands. There is more real thought in a Yankee's hand than in a Southerner's head. This is not true of a class, or of single individuals, or of single States. It pervades the air. It is Northern public sentiment. It springs from our ideas of manhood. These influences, acting through generations, have been wrought into the very blood. It is in the stock. Go where you will a Yankee is a working creature. He is the honey-bee of mankind. Only Work is royal among us. It carries the sceptre, and changes all nations by its touch, opening its treasures and disclosing its secrets.

But with all this industry, you shall find nowhere on earth so little *drudging* work as in the North. It is not the servitude of the hands to material nature. It is the glorious exercise of mind upon nature. They vex nature with incessant importunities. They are always prying, and thinking, and trying.

In California, gold is found in quartz formations. But in New England, and the free inventive North, in the geology of industry, gold is found everywhere—in rye straw and bonnets, in leather and stone, in wool, felts and cloths; in wood, in

stone, and in very ice. It is wrapped up in the beggar's raiment, which unroll in our mills into paper—yesterday, a beggar's feculant rags; today, a newspaper, conveying the world's daily life into twenty thousand families. And so great are the achievements of labor that everybody honors it. It stands among us as an invisible dignity. Four spirits there are that rule in New England—religion, social virtue, intelligence, and work; and this last takes something from them all, and is their physical exponent. So that not only is work honored and honorable, but the want of it is an implied discredit. The presumption is always against a man who does not labor.

In the South, the very reverse is true, as a general proposition.

It is true, because labor is the peculiar badge of Slavery. It does not stand, as with us, a symbol of intelligence, but a symbol of stupid servitude. It is the business of those whom the law puts out of the pale of society and accounts chattels, and who, by the opinion of society, are at the bottom, and under the feet of respectable men. To work is, therefore, *prima facie* evidence of degradation. It is ranking oneself with a slave by doing a slave's tasks; as eating a beggar's crust with him would be a beggar's fellowship.

But this is not the whole reason, nor the chiefest and more potent reason of the difference between public feeling about WORK, North and South.

The ideas of men in the South do not inspire any such tendency. Men are judged there not by what they are and are to be, but by what they *can now do*. Only such things as have an echo in them, that reverberate in the ear of public opinion, that produce an effect of notice, honor, advancement in the OPINIONS of men, are relished. In the North, men are educated to *be* something—in the South to *seem* something. The North tends to *doing*—the South to *appearing*. And both tendencies spring from the root of opposite theories of men and notions of society.

And it is this innate, hereditary indisposition to work that, after all, is the greatest obstacle to emancipation. Laziness in the South and money in the North, are the bulwarks of Slavery! To take away a planter's slaves is to cut off his hands. There is where he keeps his work. There is none of it in himself. And it is this, too, which leads to the contempt which southern people feel for northern men. They are working men, and work is flavored to the Southerner with ideas of ignominy, of meanness, of vulgar

lowness. Neither can they understand how a man who works all his life long can be high-minded and generous, intelligent and refined.

Not only is there this contrast in dignity of work, but even more—in rights of industry. Work, in the North, has responsibilities that are prodigious educators. We ordain that a man shall have the fullest chance, and then he shall have the results of his activity. He shall take all he can make, or he shall take the whole result of *indolence*. It is a double education. It inspires labor by hope of fruition, and intensifies it by the fear of non-fruition. The South have their whole body of laborers at work without either responsibility. They cut it off at both ends. They virtually say to the slave, in reality, “*Be lazy*, for ‘all that you earn shall do you no good; be lazy,’ ‘for when you are old and helpless we are bound to take care of you.’”

It is this apparent care for the helplessness of slaves, that has won the favor of many northern men, and of some who ought to have known better the effect of taking off from men the responsibility of labor, in both ways, its fruition and its penalty. Once declare in New York that Government would take care of poverty and old age, so as to make it honorable, and it would be a premium upon improvidence. With us, it is expected that every man will work, will earn, will lay up, will deliver his family from public charity. There is, to be sure, an Alms House to catch all who, by misfortune or improvidence, fall through. But such is the public opinion in favor of personal independence springing from industry, that a native-born American citizen had rather die than go to an Alms-House. Foreigners are our staple paupers. Our charity feeds the poor wretches whom foreign slavery has crippled and cast upon us. But the whole South is a vast work-house for the slave while young, and a vast alms-house for him when old, and neither young or old, is he permitted to feel the responsibility for labor. And this, too, explains the *apparent* advantage which the South has over the North in the matter of pauperism and distress. The northern system intends to punish those who will not work. Is it not a system calculated for slaves nor for lazy men. If indolence comes under it, it will take the penalty of not working. And nowhere else in the world is the penalty of indolence, and even of shiftlessness, so terrible as in the North, as nowhere else is the remuneration of a virtuous industry so ample and so widely diffused.

II. There is just as marked a contrast upon

the subject of education, and especially of Common Schools. In the North we have COMMON Schools. This is more than a School. It is more than a public school. It is a *Common School*, in distinction from a *select*, or class school. It is a public provision for bringing together, upon a perfect equality, the children of the rich and the poor, the noble and ignoble, the high and the low. It is a provision of our institutions, by which every generation is led to a line and made to start equal and together. There will be inequality enough as soon as men get into life. Some shoot ahead ; some, like dull sailors in a fleet, are dropped behind, and men are scattered all along the ocean. But the *Common School* gathers up their children and brings them all back again to take a new start together. Thus our schools are not mere whetstones to the intellect ; they are institutions for evening up society ; they resist the tendency to separation into classes, which grows with the prosperity of a community ; they bind together, in cordial sympathy, all classes of citizens. For nothing is more tenacious than school-day remembrances, and the last things that we forget are playmates and schoolmates.

The South may have schools. But never *Common Schools*. The South has no *common* people. There can be States, there, but never *Commonwealths*. There is no *common* ground, where the theory of society grades men upon a perpendicular scale. It is a society of *classes*, and a society of *classes* can never be a *community*. When the whole labor of a State is performed by a degraded class, that are not included in the State as citizens or social beings, it is impossible but that the class next above them should feel the force of those theories and ideas which have produced such a state of things. It is so. The poor white population of the South is degraded. They are ignorant—they are not fertile in thought or labor. They are not so low as the slaves, nor so high as those who own slaves. There are three classes—the top, the middle, and the bottom ; and two of these, the top and bottom, being fixed and legal, the middle is modified by them both.

In such a Society, there cannot be a *Common School*, in any such sense as we mean it. Indeed, there cannot be *general education* in any State where ignorance is the legal condition of one-half the population, as is the case in many Southern States. Ignorance is an institution in the South. It is a political necessity. It is as much provided for by legislation and by public sentiment, and guarded by enactments, as intelligence is in the

North. It must be. The restrictions which keep it from the slave will keep it from the whites, excepting, always, the few who live at the top. There cannot be an atmosphere of intelligence. Slaves would be in danger of breathing that. There cannot be a common public sentiment, a common school, nor common education. Knowledge is power, not only, but powder, putting the South in the risk of being blown up, by careless handling and too great abundance.

III. Closely connected with this, and springing from the same causes, is a contrast between the North and the South, in respect to free speech and open discussion by lip and by type.

The theory of the North is, that every man has the right, on every subject, to the freest expression of his opinions, and the fullest right to urge them upon the convictions of others. It is not a permission of law ; it is the inherent right of the individual. Law is only to protect the citizen in the use of that right.

It is the theory of the North that society is as much a gainer by this freedom of discussion as is the individual.

It is a perpetual education of the people, and a safeguard to the State. There is the utmost latitude of speech and discussion among our citizens. The attempt to abridge it would be so infatuated that the most dignified Court that ever sat in Boston would become an object of universal merriment and ridicule, that should presume to arrest and cause to be indicted any man for free speaking in old Faneuil Hall. Merriment, I say, for who would not laugh at a philosopher who would set snares for the stars, and fix his net to catch the sun, and regulate their indiscreet shining. Darkness and silence are excellent for knaves and tyrants ; but the attempt to command the one or the other in the North, changes the knave to an imbecile and the tyrant to a fool.

But should any power, against the precedents of the past, the spirit of our people, the theory of our civil polity and the rights of individual man succeed, and make headway against free speech, and put it in jeopardy, it would convulse the very frame-work of society. There would be no time for a revolution—there would be an *eruption*, and fragmentary Judges, Courts and their minions would fly upward athwart the sky, like stones and balls of flame driven from the vomiting crater of a furious volcano ! No. This is a right like the right of breathing. This is a liberty that broods upon us like the atmosphere. The grand American doctrine that men may speak

what they think, and may print what they speak—that all public measures shall have free public discussion—cannot be shaken; and any party must be intensely American that can afford to destroy the very foundation of American principle that public questions shall be publicly discussed, and public procedure be publicly agreed upon. Right always gains in the light, and Wrong in the dark. An owl can whip an eagle in the night!

The South, holding a heathen theory of man—an aristocratic theory of society,—is bound to hold, and does hold, a radically opposite practice in respect to rights of speech and freedom of the press.

There is not freedom of opinion in the South and there cannot be.

Men may there talk of a thousand things—of all religious doctrines, of literature, of art, of public political measures—but no man has liberty to talk as he pleases about the structure of southern society, and apply to the real facts of southern life and southern internal questions that searching investigation and public exposure which, in the North, brings every possible question to the bar of public opinion, and makes society boil like a pot!

Yes, you may speak of Slavery, if you will defend it; you may preach about it, if you shingle its roof with Scripture texts; but you may not talk, nor preach, nor print abolition doctrines, though you believe them with the intensity of inspiration!

The reason given is, that it will stir up insurrection. And so it will. It is said that free speech is inflammatory. So it is. That it would bring every man's life in the South into jeopardy; that, in self-defence, they most limit and regulate the expression of opinion. But what is that theory of Government, and what is the state of society under it, in which free speech and free discussion are dangerous? It is the boast of the North, not alone that speech and discussion are free, but that we have a society constructed in every part so rarely, wisely, and justly, that they can *endure* free speech; no file can part, but only polish. We turn out any law, and say, *Discuss it!* that it may be the stronger! We challenge scrutiny for our industry, for our commerce, for our social customs, for our municipal affairs, for our State questions, for all that we believe, and all that we do, and everything that we build. We are not in haste to be born in respect to any feature of life. We say—probe it, question it,

put fire to it. We ask the *experience of the past* to sit and try it. We ask the ripest *wisdom of the present* to test and analyze it. We ask enemies to plead all they know against it. We challenge the whole world of ideas, and the great deep of human interests to come up upon anything that belongs, or is *to belong*, to public affairs. And then, when a truth, a policy, or a procedure comes to birth, from out of the womb of such discussion, we know that it will stand. And when our whole public interests are rounded out and built up, we are glad to see men going around and about, marking well our towers, and counting our bulwarks. May it do them good to see such architecture and engineering! And it is just this difference that distinguishes the North and the South. We have institutions that will stand public and private discussion—they have not. We will not *have* a law, or custom, or economy, which cannot be defended against the freest inquiry. Such a rule would cut them level as a mowed meadow! They live in a crater, forever dreading the signs of activity. They live in a powder magazine. No wonder they fear light and fire. It is the plea of Wrong since the world began. Discussion would unseat the Czar; a free press would dethrone the ignoble Napoleon; free speech would revolutionize Rome. Freedom of thought and freedom of expression! they are mighty champions, that go with unsheathed swords the world over, to redress the weak, to right the wronged, to pull down evil and build up good. And a State that will be damaged by free speech ought to be damaged. A King that cannot keep his seat before free speech ought to be unseated. An order or an institution that dreads freedom of the press has *reason* to dread it. If the South would be revolutionized by free discussion, how intensely does that fact show her dying need of revolution! She is a dungeon, full of damps and death-air. She needs light and ventilation. And the only objection is, that if there were light and air let in, it would no longer be a dungeon.

#### IV. There is a noticeable contrast between Northern and Southern ideas of Religion.

We believe God's revealed word to contain the influence appointed for the regeneration and full development of every human being, and that it is to be employed as God's universal stimulant to the human soul, as air and light are the universal stimulants of vegetation.

We preach it to arouse the whole soul; we preach it to fire the intellect, and give it wings

by which to compass knowledge ; we preach it to touch every feeling with refinement, to soften rudeness and enrich affections ; we build the family with it ; we sanctify love, and purge out lust ; we polish every relation of life ; we inspire a cheerful industry and whet the edge of enterprise, and then limit them by the bonds of justice and by the moderation of a faith which looks into the future and the eternal. We teach each man that he is a child of God ; that he is personally one for whom the Savior died ; we teach him that he is known and spoken of in heaven, his name called ; that angels are sent out upon his path to guard and to educate him ; we swell within him to the uttermost every aspiration, catching the first flame of youth and feeding it, until the whole heart glows like an altar, and the soul is a temple bright within, and sweet, by the incense-smoke and aspiring flame of perpetual offerings and divine sacrifices. We have never done with him. We lead him from the cradle to boyhood ; we take him then into manhood, and guide him through all its passes ; we console him in age, and then stand, as he dies, to prophesy the coming heaven, until the fading eye flashes again, and the unhearing ear is full again ; for from the other side ministers of grace are coming, and he beholds them, and sounds on earth and sights are not so much lost as swallowed up in the glory and the melody of the heavenly joy !

Now tell me whether there is any preaching of the Gospel to the slave, or whether there can be, and he yet remain a slave ? We preach the Gospel to arouse men, they to subdue them ; we to awaken, they to soothe ; we to inspire self-reliance, they submission ; we to drive them forward in growth, they to repress and prune down growth ; we to convert them into men, they to make them content to be beasts of burden !

Is this *all* that the Gospel has ? When credulous ministers assure us that slaves have the means of grace, do they mean that they have such teaching as *we* have ? Or that there is any such *ideal* in preaching ? The power of religion with us is employed to set men on their feet ; to make them fertile, self-sustaining, noble, virtuous, strong, and to build up society of men, each one of whom is large, strong, capacious of room, and filled with versatile powers.

Religion with them does no such thing. It doth the reverse.

With them it is Herod casting men into prison. With us it is the angel, appearing to lead them out of prison and set them free ! In short

religion with us is emancipation and liberty ; with them it is bondage and contentment.

It is very plain that while nominally republican institutions exist in both the North and South, they are animated by a very different spirit, and used for a different purpose. In the North, they aim at the welfare of the whole people ; in the South they are the instruments by which a few control the many. In the North, they tend toward Democracy ; in the South, toward Oligarchy.

It is equally plain that while there may be a union between Northern and Southern States, it is external, or commercial, and not internal and vital, springing from common ideas, common ends, and common sympathies. It is a union of merchants and politicians and not of the people.

Had these opposite and discordant systems been left separate to work out each its own results, there would have been but little danger of collision or contest.

But they are politically united. They come together into one Congress. There these antagonistic principles, which creep with subtle influence through the very veins of their respective States, break out into open collision upon every question of national policy. And, since the world began, a republican spirit is unfit to secure power. It degenerates it in the many. But an aristocratic spirit always has aptitude and impulse toward power. It seeks and grasps it as naturally as a hungry lion prowls and grasps its prey.

For fifty years the imperious spirit of the South has sought and gained power. It would have been of but little consequence were that power still republican. The seat of empire may be indifferently on the Massachusetts Bay or the Ohio, on the Lakes or on the Gulf; if it be the same empire, acting in good faith for the same democratic ends.

But in the South the growth of power has been accompanied by a marked revolution in political faith, until now the theory of Mr. Calhoun, once scouted, is becoming the popular belief. And that theory differs in nothing from outright European Aristocracy, save in the forms and instruments by which it works.

The struggle, then, between the North and the South is not one of sections, and of parties, but of *Principles* — of principles lying at the foundations of governments — of principles that cannot coalesce, nor compromise ; that must hate each other, and contend, until the one shall drive out the other.

Oh! how little do men dream of the things that are transpiring about them! In Luther's days, how little they knew the magnitude of the results pending that controversy of fractious monk and haughty pope! How little did the frivolous courtier know the vastness of that struggle in which Hampden, Milton and Cromwell acted! We are in just such another era. Dates will begin from the period in which we live!

Do not think that all the danger lies in that bolted cloud which flashes in the Southern horizon. There is decay, and change, here in the North. Old New-England, that suckled American liberty, is now suckling wolves to devour it.

What shall we think when a President of old Dartmouth College goes over to Slavery, and publishes to the world his religious conviction of the rightfulness of it, as a part of God's disciplinary government of the world—wholesome to man, as a punishment of sins which he never committed, and to liquidate the long arrearages of Ham's everlasting debt! and avowing that, under favorable circumstances, he would buy and own slaves! A Southern volcano in New-Hampshire, pouring forth the lava of despotism in that incorrupt, and noble old fortress of liberty! What a College to educate our future legislators!

What are we to think, when old Massachusetts, the mother of the Revolution, every league of whose soil swells with the tomb of some heroic patriot, shall make pilgrimages through the South, and, after surveying the lot of slaves under a system that turns them out of manhood, pronounces them chattles, denies them marriage, makes their education a penal and penitentiary offence, makes no provision for their religious culture, leaving it to the stealth of good men, or the interest of those who regard religion as a curry-comb, useful in making sleek and nimble beasts—a system which strikes through the fundamental instincts of humanity, and wounds nature in the core of the human heart, by taking from parents all right in their children, and leaving the family like a bale of goods, to be unpacked, and parceled out and sold in pieces, without any other protection than the general good nature of easy citizens: what shall be thought of the condition of the public mind in Boston, when one of her most revered, and personally, deservedly beloved pastors, has come up so profoundly ignorant of what we thought every child knew, that he comes home from this pilgrimage, to teach old New-England to check her repugnance to Slavery, to dry up her tears of sympathy, and to take comfort in the assurance that Slavery, on the whole,

is as good or better for three millions of laboring men as liberty. He has instituted a formal comparison between the state of society and the condition of a laboring population in a slave system and those in a free State, and left the impression on every page that Liberty works no better results than servitude, and that it has mischiefs and inconveniences which Slavery altogether avoids.

Read that book in Faneuil Hall, and a thousand aroused and indignant ghosts would come flocking there, as if they heard the old roll-call of Bunker Hill. Yea, read those doctrines on Bunker Hill—and would it flame or quake? No. It would stand in silent majesty, pointing its granite finger up to Heaven and to God—an everlasting witness against all Slavery, and all its abettors or defenders.

At this moment, the former parties that have stood in counterpoise have fallen to pieces. And we are on the eve, and in the very act, of reconstructing our parties. One movement there is that calls itself American. Oh, that it were or would be! Never was an opening so auspicious for a true American party that, embracing the *principles* of American institutions, should enter our Temple of Liberty and drive out thence not merely the interloping Gentiles, but the money-changers, and those, also, who sell oxen, and cattle and slaves therein.

It is not the question whether a Northern party should be a party of philanthropy, or of propagandism, or of abolition. It is simply a question whether, for fear of these things, they will ignore and rub out of their creed every principle of human rights!

I am not afraid of foreigners among us. Nevertheless, our politicians have so abused us through them, that I am glad that a movement is on foot to regulate the conduct of new-comers among us, and oblige them to pass through a longer probation before they become citizens. In so far as I understand the practical measures proposed and set forth in the Message of the Governor of Massachusetts, I approve them.

But I ask you, fellow-citizens, whether the simple accident of birth is a basis broad enough for a permanent National party? Is it a *principle*, even? It is a mere fact.

Ought we not to look a little at what a man is *after* he is born, as well as at the place where? Especially, when we remember that Arnold was born in Connecticut and La Fayette in France.

If then, a party is American, ought it not to be because it represents those principles which are

fundamental to American Institutions and to American policy? principles which stand in contrast with European Institutions and policy?

Which of these two theories is the American? The North has one theory, the South another; which of them is to be called *the American idea*? Which is American—Northern ideas or Southern ideas? That which declares all men free &c., or that which declares the superior races free, and the inferior, Slaves?

That which declares the right of every man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—or that which declares the right of strength and intelligence to subordinate weakness and ignorance?

That which ordains popular education, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, public discussion—or that which makes these a prerogative, yielded to a class but denied to masses?

That which organizes Society as a Democracy and Government, and Republic—or that which organizes Society as an Aristocracy, and Government as an Oligarchy?

Which shall it be—that of organized New England townships, schools, and churches—that resisted taxation without representation—that covered Boston harbor with tea, as if all China had shook down her leaves there—which spake from Faneuil Hall, and echoed from Bunker Hill; or that policy which landed slaves on the Chesapeake—that has changed Old Virginia from a land of heroes into a breeding-ground of slaves—that has broken down boundaries, and carried war over our lines, not for liberty, but for more territory for slaves to work, that the owners might multiply, and the Aristocracy of America stand on the shores of two oceans, an unbroken bound all between?

If a *National* American party is ever formed, by leaving out the whole question of Human Rights, it will be what a man would be—his soul left out!

An American National party—Liberty left out!

An American party—Human Rights left out!

Gentlemen, such a party will stink with dissolution before you can get it finished. No Masonry can make it solid—no art can secure it. No anchor that was ever forged in infernal stythy can go deep enough into political mud to hold it!

If you rear up an empty name; if you take that revered name American, all the world over radiant and revered, as the symbol of human rights and human happiness—if you sequester and stuff that name with the effete doctrines of despotism, do you believe you can supplicate from

any gods the boon of immortality for such an unbaptized monster? No. It may live to ravage our heritage for a few days, but there is a spirit of liberty that lives among us, and that shall live And aroused by that spirit, there shall spring up the yet unaroused hosts of men that have not bowed the knee to Baal—and we will war it to the knife, and knife to the hilt.

For, IT SHALL be; America shall be free!

We will take that for our life's enterprise. Dying, we will leave it a legacy to our children, and they shall will it to theirs, until the work is done, our fathers' prayers are answered, and this whole land stands clothed and in its right mind—a symbol of what the earthly fruits of the Gospel are!

If a National party is now to be formed, what shall it be, and what shall its office be?

It shall be a peacemaker, say sly politicians. Yes, peace by war. But an American party, seeking peace with the imperious Aristocracy by yielding everything down to the root—one would think no party need be formed to do that. Judas did as much without company. Arnold did that without companions.

An American National party must either be a piebald and patched-up party, carrying in its entrails the mortal poison of two belligerent schemes, former legendary disputes, and agitation, and furious conflict; or, to be a real national party, it must first be a *Northern* party and become national. We must walk again over the course of history. Here in the North Liberty began. Its roots are with us yet. All its associations and all its potent institutions are with us. Having once given forth this spirit of liberty, now fading out of our Southern States, the North should again come forth and refill the poisoned veins that have been drinking the hemlock of Despotism with the new blood of Liberty! Let us give sap to the tree of Liberty, that it may not wither and die!

When Hercules was born, but yet a child, the jealous Juno sent two serpents to his cradle to destroy him. Hercules or the serpents must die. Both could not lie in the same bed. He seized them and suffocated them by his grip, while his poor brother, Iphiclus, filled the house with his shrieks. An infernal Juno, envious of the destined greatness of this country, hath sent this serpent upon it! What shall we do? Shall we imitate Hercules or Iphiclus? Shall we choke it; or shall we form a timid *National* party and shriek?

Gentlemen, you will never have rest from this subject until there is a victory of principles. Northern ideas must become American, or Southern ideas must become *American*, before there will be peace. If the North gives to the Nation her radical principles of human rights and democratic Governments, there will be the peace of an immeasurable prosperity. If the South shall give to the country a policy derived from her heathen notions of men, there will be such a peace as men have overdrugged with opium, that deep lethargy just before the mortal convulsions and death ! All attempts at evasion, at adjourning, at concealing and compromising are in vain. The reason of our long agitation is, not that restless Abolitionists are abroad, that ministers will meddle with improper themes, that parties are disregardful of the country's interest. These are symptoms only, not the disease ; the effects, not the causes.

Two great powers that will not live together are in our midst, and tugging at each other's

throats. They will search each other out, though you separate them a hundred times. And if by an insane blindness you shall contrive to put off the issue, and send this unsettled dispute down to your children, it will go down, gathering volume and strength at every step, to waste and desolate their heritage. Let it be settled now. Clear the place. Bring in the champions. Let them put their lances in rest for the charge. Sound the trumpet, and *God save the right !*

The latter portion of the lecture was frequently interrupted by boisterous applause.

After Mr. Beecher had taken his seat, there were loud calls for Mr. GIDDINGS, whereupon that gentleman came forward and said that he had not come to make a speech, but, like a good Methodist brother, he would add his exhortation to the excellent sermon of his clerical friend. In conclusion, Mr. Giddings besought all to enter heartily into the contest for Freedom—to trust in God and keep their powder dry ! [Loud applause.]



